

Strategic Plan for Education (2005-2010)

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Sector analysis

In 2002, at the invitation of UNESCO, a high level Committee, comprising prominent Afghan experts, convened to draft the educational policies and proposals for the new Constitution. The recommendations of the Commission included the right to free education for all citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion and language, the need for geographically-balanced development of education, policy on educational governance, teacher training, national infrastructure for educational planning, non-formal education and distance learning. Subsequently, the transitional government's National Development Framework of April 2002 highlighted provision of education, with special emphasis on quality education, teacher training, and vocational education, as one of its priority programs.

To achieve this vision, government has identified three strategic areas for intervention: (a) Expand access and raise the quality of primary and secondary education country-wide; (b) Build a higher education system that responds to Afghanistan's reconstruction needs, creates new professional and income opportunities for Afghans, and meets international standards; (c) Expand citizens access to vocational and informal education, which is closely connected to the demands for skills in the economy, with special focus on improving livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations like widows and the disabled, returning refugees and internally displaced persons, demobilized soldiers and unemployed youth.

Basic (primary and secondary) education

Current situation

Since the fall of the Taliban large numbers of students, many returning from outside Afghanistan, have enrolled in school. The rate of enrollment in primary education has doubled, with an estimated 4.8 million children in primary and secondary, more than at any time in Afghanistan's history. Gender disparities have been halved. According to a UNICEF, the number of teachers in 2002 was 70,000 and today, according to the MOE, it has grown 50% to 105,000.

However, despite this progress, there are enormous challenges in the face of 25 years of war and upheaval:

- Only half of all children age seven through thirteen are currently enrolled in school, with girls representing only 34% of enrollments.
- Less than half of first grade enrolled children complete fifth grade, for girls, only one in four starting first completes fifth grade. Children do not enroll or stay in school for many reasons – economic constraints, family obligations, cultural practices, poor quality teaching, but the single most important factor in why children do not enroll, especially girls, is the school is too distant, or not available at all.
- Eighty percent of school facilities have been damaged or destroyed and the MOE projects the need for an additional 3,413 schools to be constructed or rehabilitated over the next several years.

- The MOE estimates a shortage of 40,000 teachers.
- An estimated 1.7 million over aged young people, many out of school, need to be reached with non-formal accelerated learning programs.
- All indicators of teaching quality are low: less than half of teachers are high school graduates; teachers use rote learning methods and lack knowledge of the subject they are teaching.

Government efforts

The government of Afghanistan is a signatory to the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and its Covenants and other conventions of the United Nations and is committed to the goals of Education for All (EFA). In line with the EFA principles articulated at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 followed by the Dakar Framework of Action, the government's vision is to ensure that all children complete compulsory education (grades 1-9).

There are two Ministries responsible for the education sector: Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The MOE is responsible for primary, secondary, vocational and technical education and literacy while the MOHE covers higher education.

The central MOE is organized into 22 departments and these are grouped into five categories: (i) Coordination and control; (ii) Planning, International Relations and Construction (iii) Management structures: Personnel and Administration (iv) Subsectoral structures comprising several specialized directorates such as that of primary education, secondary education, professional and vocational education, literacy, health, Islamic education, and sciences education (v) Pedagogic Structures: teacher training, translation and compilation (curriculum and textbooks), printing and publication, and distance education.

Each of the 32 provinces has an education office that is responsible for implementing the national policies and administering finances allocated by the central government. The provincial education departments (PED) are accountable to the Provincial Governor and the Ministry of Education at the center. In addition to the PEDs, there are 535 District Education Departments (DED).

The overall organizational model of the MOE is a centralized one, with most decision-making authority resting at the center. In order to encourage innovation and sustainability, there is a need to delegate decision-making and spending power at the provincial, district and local government level. There is also a need for rationalization of the role of the Ministry from that of a service provider to that of policy-maker, regulating and monitoring service delivery.

There are no accurate records available of the actual number of staff working in the provincial offices, districts, and schools. Estimates vary from source to source, making the process of planning human and financial resources difficult. Lack of reliable data, capacity constraints, lack of clear cut roles and responsibilities of the different departments, inadequate coordination among them, compound the problems. The absorptive capacity of the Ministry is limited. Per a UNICEF report, in 2003, out of the

\$250 million education budget the MOE formulated, donors committed only \$66.1 million and MOE was able to disburse only \$19.2 million.

Despite the above challenges, the MOE has achieved considerable success in restarting the education system and increasing enrollments. This is owing to the high level of motivation and commitment of the MOE, the exceptional leadership in some key departments of the Ministry, and the openness/receptivity to working with international consultants in order to build capacity. Also, the Ministry has undertaken some encouraging steps such as initiating a revision of its staffing structure and introducing personnel and administrative reforms, and establishing a donor coordination mechanism to coordinate the Teacher Education Program (TEP).

External support

The government has almost no budget of its own to carry out its educational activities and is almost entirely dependent on donors who contribute substantially to the education sector. Among the principal bilateral donors and international organizations providing significant support for education are the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, DANIDA, JICA, GTZ and the Asian Development Bank.

International NGOs such as Save the Children, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, and Aga Khan Development Network, complement the efforts of donors by providing educational opportunities for hard-to-reach children and non-literate adults through community schools, residential schooling for orphans, and skills training.

However, despite significant donor funding in most priority areas such as construction and rehabilitation of school buildings, textbook printing and distribution, curriculum development, institutional capacity building, there is a funding gap between the national budget and available funding.

The **World Bank** works directly with the government of Afghanistan. All their education funding to the government is currently in the form of grants and has three broad components: (i) school grants for quality enhancement and infrastructure development. This component is concentrated in five provinces: Bamiyan, Logar, Parwan, Kapisa, and Badakshan (ii) capacity building/human resources development – this includes teacher training, training of school principals and capacity building of DEDs and PEDs; and (iii) policy development and monitoring and evaluation. The Bank will be assisting the Ministry with school mapping and planning for the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The Bank also supported preparation of *Securing Afghanistan's Future*, which provides a detailed analysis of education sector needs and priorities. The World Bank representative is a founding member of the Teacher Education Program (TEP), a group of donors working with the MOE Teacher Training Department to develop policies, a strategic plan and a framework for coordinating teacher training programs in Afghanistan.

While **UNICEF**'s efforts have largely focused on teacher training, they have also assisted the MOE in the distribution of school supplies and textbooks to all schools throughout the country; distribution of 1000 tents to accommodate the influx of girls in schools; and identifying schools in need of repair, locating sites for new schools; producing

standardized specifications for construction of schools. Another of UNICEF's important contributions has been in formulating a framework for the development of a modern curriculum. Textbooks for some of the primary grades are being developed with technical assistance from the Teachers College Columbia University. UNICEF has conducted short-term refresher training for an estimated 50,000 teachers in language arts, pedagogy, and land mine awareness. They have also developed training manuals for future training programs for teachers. UNICEF is an active member of the Teacher Education Program (TEP).

The **United Nations High Commission on Refugees** (UNHCR) undertook a survey of the physical infrastructure of schools. This report was used as a basis for the construction and rehabilitation of schools in the country, to which USAID has made a major contribution.

DANIDA has identified five priority areas for support to primary education in Afghanistan. These are: curriculum development; teacher training and development; educational materials development (including textbook development and printing); physical infrastructure; and aid management and planning and management capacity development. Danish funding will include technical assistance, as needed in areas such as syllabus development, teacher education and development and management. DANIDA is also active with TEP.

JICA has supported the reconstruction efforts of Afghanistan by providing assistance to the ongoing efforts of the UNICEF and UNESCO and also by implementing projects through their own contractors. JICA has repaired existing women's schools, and built new ones as part of a wider effort at improving the status of women; funded UNESCO for training Afghan teachers in Pakistan and developing literacy and extracurricular education in Afghanistan; contributed to UNICEF's Back-to-School Campaign; placed Education Advisors in the MOE and in the Literacy Department; and promoted youth friendship programs. JICA is represented on TEP as well.

In addition, there are small-scale teacher training initiatives being implemented and managed by NGOs. For example, **Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee** (BRAC) has been training teachers in the Kapisa and Parwan Provinces while **CARE International** and **Save the Children** are training teachers in the Logar and Bamiyan Provinces, and Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Baghlan and Badakhshan. ISCECO (Islamic Countries) is training teachers who teach Islamic studies and Arabic in various provinces.

USAID's current program

USAID's current objectives are to provide accelerated learning to overage students particularly girls who were denied access to education under the Taliban; improve teacher performance; ensure adequate school textbooks for all grades; increase education facilities; and strengthen the capacity of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education.

In 2004-05 USAID is continuing support for the 4 components of the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP): Accelerated learning, which enrolls over-age, particularly female students in 17 provinces, in non-formal learning programs that

advance them 2 grades each year until they are ready to join mainstream school grade level; printing and distribution of textbooks in Dari and Pashto for grades 1 – 12; radio-based teacher training by subject in Dari and Pashto; and technical assistance to build MOE planning, policy and management capacity. Separate from APEP, USAID and Department of Defense contractors are constructing, rehabilitating, and equipping schools.

USAID's education program was designed to meet urgent needs: textbook printing, radio-based teacher training, and accelerated learning in 3 provinces. In March of '04, the program expanded accelerated learning to 17 provinces, increased the number of radio-based teacher training programs, printed and distributed another round of textbooks and added a technical assistance component to strengthen capacity at the MOE and MOHE. Overall, the program is achieving and exceeding its objectives. During the past two years, MOE capacity has grown significantly to the point where planning has begun for transferring responsibility of selected APEP activities to the MOE for continued implementation.

Vocational education

Current situation

With a devastated economy and extremely under-resourced government staff, Afghanistan is in desperate need of skilled workers—ranging from laborers with basic industrial skills to professional leadership. USAID's program analyses and the Mission's efforts to date indicate, the need for trained workers in construction, manufacturing, commerce, justice, health, agriculture as well as in the operations and maintenance of power, water, transportation, and communications infrastructure. Yet there is no Afghan system and very little donor structure in place to train people in the skills needed in these sectors. As a consequence, external development agencies are either employing foreigners, even for the most basic tasks of road building, while unskilled Afghan people sit idle, or they are hiring Afghan workers who produce sub-standard results.

While the general need for skilled workers is widely recognized, there is no good information about the demand for specific skills. Nor are there standards or certification programs that allow employers to judge the competence of potential recruits.

Government efforts

One of the government's 12 National Priority Programs is the National Skills Development and Market Linkages Program (NSD&MLP). The emphasis in this program is clearly on the more fundamental, basic skills, at least in the short and intermediate terms. The immediate strategy of the program aims to provide skills training to the defined vulnerable groups. The NSD&MLP lays out a comprehensive plan in the four traditionally defined sectors (agriculture, industry, commerce, and service), plus smaller programs in "Second Chance Livelihood Skills Development," infrastructure development, and labor market surveys.

The stated aims are to provide skills development in the immediate term for the worst affected groups in the community, to provide skilled workers for those sectors currently

facing a worker shortage in the intermediate term, and to provide quality training in the long term to meet the needs of a modern market economy.

The government has designated several groups as being particularly vulnerable as the nation emerges from decades of conflict. Estimates of the numbers of persons in each of these categories are so varied as to be useless, but there can be no doubt that the numbers are large. As an example, the number of demobilized soldiers was originally projected to be approximately 60,000. Similarly, the numbers of widows and war-affected children are in the tens of thousands. The defined vulnerable groups include:

- Demobilized soldiers and child-soldiers.
- War affected children.
- Street and working children
- Internally displaced persons.
- People with disabilities.
- Unemployed persons
- Single-headed households (primarily widows)
- Returning refugees.

The immediate goal involves the expenditure of approximately \$5 million over the next three years to provide short-term skills training that will lead to employment of 10,000 citizens.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is responsible for this program, has limited capacity. The ministry's activities in this arena have been assisted by an informal group of international advisors. Without this help, or some analog, the Ministry is ill-equipped to run a \$20 million NPP.

The Ministry of Education's Department of Vocational Education runs the formal vocational training school system, which is more or less defunct. It has operated approximately 40 technical schools, but most of these are now in serious disrepair. However, with good management, this nationwide system could be resuscitated and would then contribute significantly to the training and the development of skilled individuals. The Ministry of Justice runs (at least) one Vocational Training Center for "delinquent children" in its care. Regrettably, there are no standards and no certification process.

Information from the Ministry of Finance (as of December 7, 2004) indicates that government requires approximately \$6.5 million for vocational training programs within the education NPP. This does not include vocational skills training taking place within other sectors.

External support

European and other bilateral agencies are providing some support to the government in rebuilding vocational education programs. Many NGOs are working effectively in this arena. Activities are not coordinated, although the IRC has made an effort at getting together an inventory. JICA has made a serious commitment, and GTZ, IOM, CONTRACK International, and other organizations are doing excellent work, particularly in the construction sector. There are a few domestic or Afghan-American

groups that are also effective, one of the best being Afghans 4 Tomorrow. University of Nebraska/Omaha and Purdue University were previously involved in USAID supported vocational education but are no longer active.

The Ministry of Finance source (www.af/MOF/budget; no date) shows that in 2004 donors funded approximately \$5.5 million in vocational training projects.

USAID's current program

USAID is not currently supporting vocational training within the formal or non-formal system. However, a new USAID initiative still in the development stage is the alternative livelihood program which seeks to offer alternative employment to workers involved in opium poppy production. One component of this program under consideration would be the provision of vocational training in the building trades where there are job opportunities.

Higher education

Current situation

There has been considerable progress in the past three years. Many buildings at Kabul University have been renovated. New emphasis has been placed on the teaching of English. There is a growing appreciation of the need for libraries and librarians. Student enrollment has grown, especially female enrollment, which in 2003 was about 20% of the total higher education student population and nearly half of the student population in the Pedagogical Institutes and the University of Education. There is a strategic plan for higher education. But there remain very serious issues:

- Only 6% of the faculty in the 16 institutions have a PhD (or equivalent) degree. At Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnic Institute the situation is better (10% and 33%, respectively); at all other institutions, the situation is very poor (2%).
- Only 12% of the faculty is female.
- There are currently no private institutes of higher education.
- Many of the buildings in the universities are in very dilapidated condition. At Kabul University the most serious infrastructure problems are at the School of Chemistry, the Faculty of Science, and the Old Medical School. Some provincial institutions have virtually no physical infrastructure of their own (e.g., Takhar, Balkh).
- Sanitation at most institutions is in a deplorable state. Kitchens at most institutions are run down, ill equipped and unsanitary. There is almost no functioning scientific equipment.
- Libraries are poorly stocked, and many of the resources are in English or Russian, neither of which can be read by a majority of students.

Government efforts

The Ministry of Higher Education has adopted a Strategic Action Plan that calls for the introduction of private higher education in Afghanistan; the designation of five specified

regional institutions to attain “university status” in the American/western sense, with concomitant strengthening of those institutions; the enhancement of the four “national” universities in Kabul; and the development of branch campuses and community colleges in the provinces.

The Ministry of Higher Education runs the sixteen universities and institutions of higher education. The Ministry has now also taken on two teaching hospitals in Kabul, with some responsibility for a third. The Ministry is strongly supportive of the soon-to-be established American University of Afghanistan, and has provided the land for this institution.

The recurrent budget for FY 1382 was 330,543,000 AF (approximately \$7 million), which is 5.5% of the total education budget or 1.3% of the total government budget. Slightly more than half of this higher education budget was for personnel. The budget for the sixteen institutions was approximately 205 million AF (approximately \$4.2 million). With a total enrollment of slightly more than 31,000 students, this equates to a per student expenditure of about \$135!

External support

UNESCO provided leadership for the Strategic Action Plan, with funding from Germany and the Nordic countries. Japan is committed to supporting the proposed Ali-Abad teaching hospital. Both Germany and Japan have funded significant reconstruction at Kabul University and elsewhere. The Government of Italy has committed \$1 million for the Legal Training Center, and INL has offered to provide furnishings. The UN is funding the building of the law library.

USAID’s current program

In 2005 USAID expects to fund a linkage between Balkh University, faculty of agriculture and an American university to support faculty development and acquisition of technical materials. USAID has funded the renovation of the Women’s Dormitory at Kabul University and the Guesthouse at the Ministry of Higher Education. The US Department of Defense has made commitments to help finance a National Testing Center. The US Army Corps of Engineers is assisting USAID with a feasibility study and cost estimation for the proposed building of American University of Afghanistan, a private, American style university projected to enroll up to 1,000 Afghan students. Pending feasibility results and cost estimates, building is planned to begin in Spring 2005. Also in the planning stage are an American international school and rehabilitation of Ghazi Boys High School and Karte Se Girls School, all in Kabul.

USAID spent over \$8 million on the women’s dormitory, about \$50,000 on the Guesthouse and has a total commitment of \$17.7 million for the American University. The Testing Center is expected to cost \$3.1 million, but these funds have not been obligated. The Legal Training Center is \$1 million, with an additional \$100K from INL. Renovation costs for KU are unknown but are in the multimillion-dollar range. USAID has requested major funding in the supplementary budget to support infrastructure development at KU.

Literacy

Current situation

Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of non-literacy in the world. In rural areas, where three-fourths of all Afghans live, 90% of the women and 63% of the men are not literate, and in many villages 95 to 100% of the women cannot read or write. Countrywide, 70% of rural and 47% of urban heads of households are not literate. Even in Kabul, among 18 to 25 year-olds, 51% of young women and 31% of young men are not literate, and the rate worsens dramatically in each older age group.

Government efforts

Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward targets an increase in the adult literacy rate from 36% to 56% between 2004 and 2015, which meets the Millennium Development Goal¹ but it does not outline any government strategy to achieve that.

Within the Ministry of Education, the Department of Functional Literacy and Non-formal Education has staff at the central Ministry and provincial department levels. However, capacities are extremely low, lack of background or training in literacy, and low government salaries that do not attract competent staff.

The MoE runs literacy schools and courses primarily in urban centers. 2003 data show 10,864 courses with 249,571 students and 6,843 teachers, with the large majority of teachers and students being male. The program includes both basic literacy and higher-level courses with a science, history, math curriculum similar to the MoE, with 60% of courses covering vocational skills such as tailoring. Students who complete the course can enter government secondary or vocational schools; most choose the latter. The curriculum is comprised of primers published many years ago, using an alphabet-led approach, that is considered by internationals and experienced Afghans as extremely poor pedagogically.

External support

UNICEF and UNESCO have developed a women's literacy text but have no funds to print the books. UNICEF's and UNESCO's new literacy texts are more linked to life skills than the old national curriculum, and depend more upon active learning. Both organizations have worked closely with the Literacy Department to co-develop these materials and therefore to get buy-in and designation of their materials as a national literacy curriculum or approved materials under the MoE. JICA is funding a Japan/UNESCO effort to replicate a community learning centers model developed elsewhere by UNESCO. A few of these have been built in Kabul/Kabul province but with no funding for programs as yet. The Literacy Department seems to endorse these as the future direction. IRC, CARE, , GTZ, AIL and others have had or are carrying out literacy efforts, some as stand alone, others in conjunction with other activities; Relief International states it has trained 7,000 women in functional literacy. Many individuals

¹ (reference, if not discussed earlier)

and small groups offer literacy classes throughout the country, most without adequate training; many provide services for a small fee and some are funded by donors.

USAID's current program

USAID has two primary objectives in literacy: (1) To help women learn literacy skills so that they might practice better health and hygiene, and to qualify some 5,500 of them to be trained as community healthcare workers and mid-wives; the program is a component of USAID's REACH project in the health sector; (2) To develop and implement a model program to provide literacy training linked with economic activities while strengthening men's and women's local councils and demonstrating acceptance of women's literacy. The model will be implemented through the National Solidarity Program. This Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP), initiated in September 2004, aims to empower rural women and young people by imparting literacy, numeracy and life skills training through a cascade model. It will also work towards strengthening democratically-elected, grassroots civil society institutions in enterprise development and participatory governance.

Experience to date in literacy has shown that training cannot be for women only, except perhaps when it has a central health focus—and even then, men need to be engaged in the dialogue and practice, as many men are a major constraint to both health and literacy in the family and the exclusion of men from literacy programs can produce a backlash.

Summary of binding constraints to government's achieving its goals

In every sub-sector of education—basic education, higher education, vocational skills training and literacy for out-of-school youth and adults—the constraints to progress are similar: pay for teachers, shortage of teachers, poorly trained teachers, poor teaching materials, lack of instructional materials/equipment and lack of facilities. The *binding constraints*—those that must be reduced if more students are to receive a quality education—are the dire lack of competent teachers/trainers and classrooms, schools and other instructional settings that provide a suitable learning environment.

Strategic objectives

The Strategic Objective in education is **increased access of children, youth and adults to quality teaching and suitable learning environments.**

This objective is reflected in the Intermediate Results in three sub-sectors: Basic (primary and secondary) education, vocational skills training, and higher education.

Basic (primary and secondary) education

Development hypotheses

Afghan students need to acquire knowledge and skills that prepare them for leading meaningful and productive lives. The critical inputs into an education system that provides these skills and knowledge are qualified teachers and a suitable learning environment. Teachers must not only know their subject matter; they must also be able to help students acquire new skills and knowledge and to think critically and creatively about information presented. Students must also have access to a safe and healthy learning environment.

Intermediate result 1

The Intermediate Result (I.R.1.) in basic education is primary and secondary **students with knowledge and skills to better prepare them for productive lives.** It has three sub-Intermediate Results.

I.R.1.1. Teachers who know their subject well and use learner-centered methods to teach it

In cooperation with the MOE and implementing partners, USAID will improve teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills through a comprehensive in-service teacher training program that uses a multiple strategies. Short, needs-based, practical courses will be developed and targeted to basic education teachers nationwide with a special effort to include MOE and community-based schools in underserved areas. The approach will entail school-based, provincial, distance, and face-to-face training. Over time and with proper follow-up this will lead to a measurable improvement in teacher performance.

I.R.1.2. A sustainable MOE system supports continuous teacher development

Through training and technical assistance, USAID will ensure that the MOE develops the institutional capacity to provide quality training and support to in-service teachers. USAID assistance will include development of teacher standards; training packages for teachers, inspectors, and headmasters; linkages between parents/community groups and schools; cadres of master trainers, teacher trainers and training managers; teacher networks, a training monitoring and evaluation system; and a EMIS to track and report on training. Throughout the 5 years of the basic education strategy USAID will work closely with the MOE and implementing partners to increasingly take over, manage, and fund a national in-service teacher training and support system.

I.R.1.3. More schools providing a safe and healthy learning environment

USAID will also focus on ensuring greater access to a suitable learning environment by working in partnership with communities, implementing partners, and the MOE to build and rehabilitate schools, again with an emphasis on primary level and underserved areas.

Higher education

Development hypotheses

The strategy is designed to assist the Afghan nation in the development of human capital and emerging leadership. A key constraint to this development is the poor quality of tertiary education, including professional education and training. Good-quality education, in turn, hinges more than any other factor on the competence of teachers. In conjunction with the Ministry of Higher Education, and using an integrated approach that takes into account the efforts of other donors and organizations, USAID will focus on the enhancement of selected existing departments/faculties and the introduction of private higher education.

Intermediate Result 2

The Intermediate Result 2 in higher education is **higher-level students with knowledge and skills that prepare them for productive lives**. It has two sub-Intermediate Results.

I.R.2.1. Upgraded standards, teaching, facilities and equipment in teacher-education institutions and selected faculties

USAID will focus first on teacher-education institutions as they prepare the teachers of tomorrow and thus help strengthen I.R. 1. Within the confines of available resources, USAID will also select other departments/faculties for assistance based on the following criteria: government development priorities, USAID objectives, opportunities, unmet needs, and cost-impact trade-offs, and donor complementarity.

I.R.2.2. Private, American-style higher education

The development of an American University of Afghanistan will provide the benefits of an American-style university education to the next generation of Afghanistan's leaders. Since existing Afghan universities do not provide appropriate training in management and other business-related subjects, public administration, or in programs designed to cultivate women's leadership, these are the areas that will form the initial focus of AUAF. The building of an American University here will give Afghanistan the opportunity to become an educational and cultural center for all of central Asia and will ensure that the leadership of this country has an American-style education with American (democratic) values.

Literacy and occupational skills training

Development hypotheses

There is a huge gap between Afghanistan's literacy and occupational needs for its recovery and long-term development and the pool of skills currently available. Efforts to

fill this gap are being carried out by the government and several donors in the formal and non-formal sector. At the community level, non-literacy rates vary according to region and gender but average between 70 – 90%, with the highest rates in rural areas and among women. Adults and young people who lack literacy have less opportunity to improve or develop new occupational skills. Separate from literacy, adults lacking basic occupational skills either perform at a sub-standard level or lose out on jobs openings to more qualified foreign workers.

To develop literacy and occupational skills on a wide scale, USAID will pursue two approaches. The first is to model, then expand, literacy and productive skills development through the extensive network of the elected Community Development Councils of the National Solidarity Program (NSP). The Councils will mobilize community resources and provide support, especially for participation of women and girls. The Councils will help facilitate a program of literacy linked with economic skills and assets development.

USAID will also strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Redevelopment to ensure continued support of community-based literacy and occupational skills training programs.

A second approach will address the market's need for skilled workers including on USAID and other donor-funded projects. It will focus on strengthening private sector capacity to provide quality integrated vocational and literacy training. Through an umbrella mechanism, USAID will award grants/contracts to training providers for job-training required by USAID projects. Recognizing the weaknesses in this sector, USAID will also offer training and TA to ensure a pool of qualified and competitive training providers.

Intermediate Result 3

Intermediate Result 3 is **out-of-school adults and youth with literacy and occupational skills**. It has two sub-Intermediate Results.

IR 3.1 Develop community-based literacy, numeracy and life skills training, particularly for women and girls.

USAID will work through communities and locally elected Community Development Councils of the National Solidarity Program to implement literacy linked with economic skills and strengthened participatory governance based upon prioritized needs of local communities.

IR 3.2 Strengthen MARRD capacity to support community-based programs for literacy, numeracy, and enterprise skill training. To build long-term sustainability, USAID will provide training and TA to the Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development to effectively plan, manage, and evaluate community-based programs

IR 3.3 Develop a Center for National Literacy.

The Center will produce appropriate pedagogy and materials adaptable to various skills needs, and provide training for quality literacy, numeracy and life skills linked with productive skills development. The Center will provide these as a resource for all relevant Mission sectors to meet their objectives for literacy and productive skills development, and for the Ministry of Education and organizations of civil society to offer quality

literacy training. The Center will also develop an innovative program for training of literacy trainers and literacy teachers with a stepped certification process that creates and supports a vocational career path for adults and young people, particularly women and older girls.

Intermediate Result 4

The Intermediate Result 4 is **a private-sector market for vocational training**. It has two sub-Intermediate Results.

I.R.4.1. A framework for a system of vocational standards and qualifications

In order to provide larger numbers of learners with timely acquisition of vocational skills, Afghanistan will need some sort of system for vocational standards and qualifications. The system will eventually be able to articulate course objectives with corresponding job qualifications and certify learners' fulfilment of course requirements. The first stage of the system is a framework that complements the primary-secondary curriculum for all students.

I.R.4.2. Model private training organizations

Because it has few models of private vocational training organizations, Afghanistan will benefit from a few successful organizations that serve as models for others. The training organizations will offer modularized courses, so that learners can acquire specific skills within a short period of time and move directly into an entry-level job or advance to a higher-level of certification. Short, modularized courses allow more learners to access the system, because each training centre can accommodate more students in a given period of time.

Implementation measures

Integration of cross-cutting objectives

Gender

All of the education programs emphasize gender equity.

Conflict

The teacher training programs in basic education will use approaches that model tolerance, compromise, and other forms of dispute resolution. In the two approaches to vocational education, USAID training programs will integrate training on values for tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution.

Counter-narcotics

The vocational training programs for out-of-school youth and adults and for unskilled workers will help offer a viable alternative to participation in opium-poppy production.

Partnerships with other agencies

Two years ago, donors often operated in isolation, worked at cross purposes and lost opportunities for leveraging resources. The situation is much improved now with USAID and donors meeting regularly to share information and discuss longer term strategies to complement rather than compete with one another's efforts. During the 5 years of the new strategy, USAID will take a leadership role in promoting donor coordination.

Specifically, USAID will seek to ensure: a coordinated approach to educational policy development and reform; sharing of best practices and successes; forging/improving school to work and public/private linkages; developing educational standards and vocational/occupational trade certifications; and encouraging more efficient and effective use of educational facilities and equipment.

Measures to ensure Afghan ownership and sustainability

A principal of the USAID strategy is a collaborative approach with partners and stakeholders. It is essential to building partner ownership and to the long term success of the education program in Afghanistan. By focusing on different levels of the system, the strategy has a natural complementarity and potential for achieving sustainable impact.

The strategy helps establish the foundation for sustainable quality education and training through the development of 1) Training and technical assistance to achieve quality teaching, 2) Institutional capacity building to bring about effective and sustainable teacher support systems, and 3) Building of facilities to increase access to education for all. The combined program supports stated partner and stakeholder objectives. USAID will involve public and private sector partners in planning, management and evaluation of activities from the community to the national level to ensure ownership and sustainability.